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RCM Career Framework

Consultant midwife

The consultant midwife role is the high point in the midwifery clinical career and represents clinical excellence, leadership and academic capability. Consultant midwives provide inspirational clinical leadership to ensure services for women, their babies and families reflect research and audit, are of high quality, appropriate and innovative. Consultant midwives will hold or be working towards a doctorate award. They remain clinically active whilst contributing to service development and future clinical career pathways.

There are four core responsibilities to the role of the consultant midwife. These are:

- Expert clinical practice
- Professional leadership and consultancy
- Education, training and development
- Research and evaluation to develop and improve practice and service

Expert clinical practice

Consultant midwives are:

- highly experienced midwives who are acknowledged clinical experts in their field
- immersed in and maintain their clinical practice, credibility and expertise by spending at least 50% of their time in clinical practice
- able to demonstrate a high degree of knowledge, expertise, authority, competence and autonomy in their chosen field of practice
- able to make key decisions without recourse to others especially where precedents do not exist
- able to work as a key part of the wider multidisciplinary team providing expert knowledge and skills

Professional leadership and consultancy

As an acknowledged expert practitioner who practices expertly within a team, consultant midwives are able to:

- lead, support, coach, mentor, inspire and empower colleagues by facilitating the development and skills of others
- influence and work with people in other disciplines services and agencies act as a resource both internally and externally with the local community and stakeholders
- provide leadership to influence the strategic vision to guide change across professional and organisational teams with a focus on quality improvements and excellence in service
- participate in and support teams in their development by establishing and maintaining national and international networks and sharing information
- contribute to and have accountability for strategic planning of services



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Education, training and development

The nature of a consultant midwife post requires a portfolio that demonstrates career long learning and development. In order to effectively educate and develop others, consultant midwives should have a formal link with an appropriate university through a joint appointment or honorary contract. A consultant midwife will hold the minimum of a master's degree and should normally be working towards a doctorate award. As such they are able to:

- contribute to the strategic development of education for students, staff and service users at a local and national level
- work collaboratively with education providers and other stakeholders to review, develop and implement learning programmes in both academic and clinical settings
- promote motivational ways to encourage and enhance learning
- communicate scholarly activity, research and new developments to support the integration of evidence based practice within learning environments in peer reviewed journals, conferences and meetings.

Research and Evaluation

Research and evaluation are paramount to consultant midwives if they are to be actively involved in developing practice and promoting research across the profession. As such they need to be able to:

- be leaders with responsibility and ability to evaluate, develop and improve service provision
- ensure that services are based on high quality evidence through implementation of research activity, findings and recommendations
- present activities and research activity in peer reviewed journals, at conferences and meetings
- use evaluation findings to improve future educational initiatives and training interventions